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AUTHORITY

AGO D/A ltr, 29 Apr 1980

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (29 May 67) FOR OT

8 June 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, HQ, 43D Signal
Battalion (Support)

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

AD827536

1. Forwarded as inclosure is Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 43D Signal Battalion (Support) for quarterly period ending 31 January 1967. Information contained in this report should be reviewed and evaluated by CDC in accordance with paragraph 6f of AR 1-19 and by CONARC in accordance with paragraph 6c and d of AR 1-19. Evaluations and corrective actions should be reported to ACSFOR OT within 90 days of receipt of covering letter.
2. Information contained in this report is provided to the Commandants of the Service Schools to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations, and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

C. A. Stanfiel
C. A. STANFIEL
Colonel, AGC

Acting The Adjutant General

1 Incl

as

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 43D SIGNAL BATTALION (SUPPORT)
APO 96318

SCCVNG-SBL

20 February 1967

SURJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967 (RCS CSFO 3-65)

TO: See Distribution

SECTION I
Significant Organization or Unit Activities

1. The 43d Signal Battalion was activated on 16 October 1966 under the provisions of USASTRATCOM General Order Number 53 dated 29 July 1966. The mission of the 43d Signal Battalion is to establish, operate and maintain Signal communications facilities to support the operations of the USMACV advisory teams at the Headquarters of ARVN Corps tactical zone in the Republic of Vietnam, and to provide highly mobile communications support to USMACV advisory teams engaged in combat operations in areas remote from established headquarters, bases and communications facilities. An added mission is to provide Base Camp Communications for the US 4th Infantry Division and other free world forces.

2. With the large and rapid troop buildup within the 43d Signal Battalion's areas of responsibility the support of USMACV advisory teams is presently a lesser effort as compared to that of tying US units into IWCS and providing Base Camp Communications. The 43d Signal Battalion installs operates and maintains fifteen VHF systems which tie into IWCS. In addition, the 43d Signal Battalion is operating communication centers at Pleiku, Ban Me Thuot, Kontum, 3/25th Inf Div, and 4th Infantry Division. Along with VHF systems and communication centers; the 43d Signal Battalion operates Base Camp switchboards at Pleiku Sub Area Command, Pleiku Local, Ban Me Thuot, Camp Holloway, Kontum, Cheo Reo, 3/25th Infantry Division and 4th Infantry Division.

3. One of the missions of the 43d Signal Battalion is to provide base camp communications for the 3rd Brigade 25th Infantry Division. The 3rd Platoon 278th Signal Company was attached to the 43d Signal Battalion for operational control in order to provide base camp communication for the 3/25 Infantry Division. During the month of January the 3rd Platoon 278th Signal Company was relieved in place by a platoon of Co "D" 36th Signal Bn. The platoon is attached to the 43d Signal Battalion for operational control. The relief in place

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was carried off with only minor difficulties. In order to facilitate a smooth transition, selected key personnel remained behind from the 3rd Platoon 278th Signal Company to orientate relieving personnel. The platoon of Co "D" 36th Signal Bn has now assumed complete control of the base camp communications.

4. A technical dial telephone modification on the AN/MTC-1 switchboard was developed by CPT Donald J Voss, Company "C", 459th Signal Battalion and utilized on a two week test basis. CPT Voss developed a one way dial trunk from Famous Switchboard (4th Inf Div) to Pleiku dial center exchange. During the two week test period Famous Switchboard operators were able to directly dial any number on the Pleiku dial central exchange, a complete detailed technical description and results of the test are enclosed. (See Incl).

5. The 43d Signal Battalion has been in operation during the entire reporting period of ninety-two days. In the area of training; during the first half of the reporting period only mandatory training was conducted. However, with the growth of the battalion in personnel during the latter part of the quarter a better organized and diversified training schedule has been implemented. OJT and Cross training programs of mission essential MOS's have been in constant operation to fill critical personnel shortages.

6. Presently the 43d Signal Battalion consist of the following units;

UNIT	LOCATIONS
HHD 43d Sig Battalion	Pleiku
Company "A", 43d Signal Battalion	Pleiku
Ban Me Thuot Detachment, "A" Co	Ban Me Thuot
Camp Holloway Detachment, "A" Co	Camp Holloway, Pleiku
Company "D", 36th Sig.Bn (Attached)	Pleiku North (3/25th Inf Div)
Company "C", 43d Signal Battalion	Kontum
3rd Platoon, Co "C", 43d Sig Bn	Hau Bom
Company "C", 459th Signal Battalion	Pleiku South (4th Inf Div)

SECTION II
PART I Observations (Lessons Learned)

a. Personnel

ITEM: (U) Organizing a Battalion Level Personnel Section.

Discussion: The personnel section, 43d Signal Battalion, was organized and became operational 6 January 1967. It is readily apparent that problems in internal operations existed. These problems were solved through a concerted effort of all personnel concerned. It was found that transition to a battalion

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staff section for the personnel section does in all cases present personnel problems during the transition period, that these problems are far from insurmountable and that assignment of qualified, experienced and well-motivated clerical personnel are the commander's best means of accomplishing not only the transition but the continuing efficient operation of a keen staff section.

Observations: It is imperative that an efficient personnel section be maintained in order to prevent morale problems resulting from non-payment, late personnel actions and mal-assignment. This section plays an important role in advising the commander of critical loses and gains in sufficient time to take effective corrective action.

b. Operations

ITEM: Lowering of AN/TRC-132 Antenna

Discussion: In the process of lowering an AN/TRC-132 Tropo Dish (30 Ft) antenna at Pleiku the antenna was dropped. TM 11-5820-519-12 states that in the raising and lowering of the AN/TRC 132 antenna a wench truck should be used. In the above case a 2½ ton truck w/wench was utilized, however, the wench jumped out of gear and the antenna fell to the ground. Had a five ton wrecker been used as in subsequent operations the antenna would not have been dropped.

Observation: A five ton wrecker should be used in raising or lowering the AN/TRC-132 Antenna as opposed to a 2½ ton truck w/wench. Size of wench truck should be clearly specified in the manual as a 3/4 ton vehicle could be considered a wench truck.

ITEM: System Outage because of Power Failure.

Discussion: Because of the critical need for power, many signal sites have several systems on a single source of power. In the event of a power failure all systems on that one power source become inoperative. It has been found that by splitting the power requirements, all systems to a single location are seldom lost. That is to say, if two systems are located in a single location both systems should have a different source of power whenever practicable.

Observation: Continuous communications can be maintained at a single location having more than one system by utilizing independent power sources.

ITEM: Operation of VHF Systems in Excessively Dusty Areas

Discussion: It has been determined that in excessively dusty areas the filters in the PP-685 should be removed and cleaned on a daily basis. Should the filters become excessively dirty heat buildup takes place and the T2 transformer will open due to excessive current being drawn.

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Observations: As a minimum the filters in the PP-685 should be cleaned on a daily basis when operating VHF Systems in excessively dusty area. To allow a sufficient air flow to prevent a heat buildup.

ITEM: Effects of dust on Reflective Paint

Discussion: While operating in excessively dusty areas it has been noted that the effectiveness of reflective paint is reduced when dust is allowed to accumulate on the top of shelters. There by considerably raising internal temperatures inside shelters.

Observations: Frequent washing down or sweeping of shelters being operated in excessively dusty areas allows rays to be properly reflected lowering temperatures within radio shelters.

ITEM: Changing of Oil in Excessively Dusty Areas of Operation

Discussion: While operating in excessively dusty areas it has been observed that generator changes must be made as frequently as every twenty five hours of operating time. Oil becomes excessively dirty and creates excessive wear on operating parts.

Observations: A greater operating efficiency and reliability can be obtained when oil changes are made on generators at least every twenty five hours, when operating in excessively dusty areas.

c. Training and Organization

ITEM: Cross Training

Discussion: Because of the existing requirement to cross train personnel in related MOS's it is imperative that appropriate records be maintained on the individual being cross trained. The records should indicate the time the individual started cross training, progress award of secondary MOS, and proficiency after cross training is completed.

Observations: Gross-Training records give the unit current and ready access to those individuals having received training on a particular piece of communications equipment within the unit.

d. Intelligence

ITEM: Personnel Security Clearances

Discussion: Many personnel have arrived in-country without the proper degree of security clearance reflected in their records although their MOS requires a security clearance. Because of not having the proper security clearance reflected within the individual 201 file, the individual could not

20 February 1967

immediately be utilized in his assigned MOS. Delays have been encountered for as long as two months or more.

Observations: Personnel requiring security clearance should have their degree of clearance reflected in their 201 File prior to departure from ZI. This would preclude unnecessary delays in assigning individuals to work in their MOS.

e. Logistics

ITEM: Equipment Shortages

Discussion: Considerable difficulty has been experienced in procuring equipment and spare parts within country although valid requisitions exist. This problem appears to stem from congestion at the ports and transfer points.

Observations: Provide a unit expeditor at battalion level to the port from which the battalion receives equipment and/or critical spare parts. The expeditor's sole job would be to expedite and to act in a liaison capacity with the support command.

ITEM: Storage Space

Discussion: Adequate storage space was not provided nor available for equipment which had been received. This necessitated using outside storage facilities and overcrowding the company motor park areas.

Observations: The solution to the problem obviously is to provide more space. However, when it became known that a battalion would be formed within country, provisions should have been made for adequate storage of equipment and billeting of personnel, latrines, office furniture and vehicles prior to activation of the battalion.

PART II Commander's Recommendations

1. The rapid build of US units in the Pleiku area, specifically the imput of the US 4th Inf Div and the Pleiku Sub-Area Logistical Command coupled with specialized support type units, created an immediate requirement for vastly expanding the existing communications facilities. Provisions to allow entrance into the already crowded long lines (IWCS) systems created needs for expansion in this area. Radio equipment availability during the buildups within the Pleiku area was poor. This necessitated land movement of all major equipment supplies from the Qui Nhon port facility, approximately seven (7) hours drive one way via armed convoy. The activation of the 43d Signal Battalion itself presented an inherent evident need for communications.

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Recommend, whenever feasible, rapid large buildups of areas containing small troop densities be preceded by advanced communications engineering, planning, stock piling of equipment, installation, and operational shake down prior to arrival of designated units. This would allow for smooth transitions, reliable dependable and efficient communications services upon troop arrivals. Advanced engineering planning and installation would result in lower overall costs to the US Government as many facilities could not accept the forced expansions in systems requirements, space requirements, troop facility requirements, etc. This resulted in later complete renovations of facilities, to properly accomplish the task. It is evident that time was of the essence in the last buildup. However, future buildups must incorporate communications planning and installation prior to actual buildup to provide the required reliable and non-overtaxed facilities.

2. As Pleiku lies in the highland regions of Vietnam, communications systems required the installation of many VHF systems blocked by mountain ranges. Radio relay of these systems was unfeasible due to non-secure hill tops. These systems once installed had the same DCA priority restoration as stable systems. Restoration of these systems in many instances was impractical due to radio propagation problems. Although more effort was expended to restore the system within allowable DCA time restoration frames, the situation was impractical. Recommend, marginal systems be designated and allowances be made by DCA as efficiency of marginal systems are dubious to begin with. This problem should be recognized by all commanders concerned. If stable systems are mandatory, then hill tops must be obtained and secured to provide a suitable relay capability.

Incl
as

Herman Ertlschweiger
HERMAN ERTLSCHWEIGER
LTC, SigC
Commanding

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APO 96307
- 1- CO, USASTRATCOM-PAC
Schofield Barracks Hawaii
APO 96557

Incl 1

SCCVNG-SY (31 Jan 67)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967 (RCS-CSFOR-65)

Headquarters, 21st Signal Group, APO 96240 25 February 1967

THRU: Commanding General, 1st Signal Brigade (USASTRATCOM), APO 96307

THRU: Deputy Commanding General, USARV, ATTN: AVC-DH, APO 96307

THRU: Commander in Chief, USARPAC, ATTN: GPOP-MH, APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the Army (ACSFOR, DA), Washington, D. C. 20310

1. Transmitted herewith is one copy of Headquarters, 43rd Signal Battalion Report, Subject: Same as above.

2. Concur with observations made by CO, 43rd Signal Battalion with exceptions noted below.

3. Future reports on Personnel and Administration portion should contain more detail on personnel situation in unit.

4. Recommend that CUNUS include in POR-POM checks to insure that all personnel who require a security clearance obtain a clearance prior to being shipped overseas. This would eliminate delay in utilization of personnel.

5. Power failure has been a major cause of system and circuit outage in Vietnam. When a signal site is established, a detailed plan for power distribution must be immediately devised. Essential features of the power distribution plan are adequate power cabling to carry the required load and a suitable switching device for the primary and alternate generators. It is not feasible at the larger signal sites to operate separate generators for each system at the site.

6. The commander indicates in Section II Part 1, paragraph C, the necessity for maintaining training records for individuals undergoing cross-training. For the same reasons, similar training records are required for individuals undergoing on-the-job training in their primary MOS. Upon satisfactory completion of on-the-job training, the individual will then be crossed-trained in a related MOS. By following this sequence in the training program, MOS proficiency and flexibility in job capability is developed.

SCCVNG-SY

1st Ind

25 February 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 31 January 1967 (RCS-CSFOR-65)

7. Although the difficulty and time involved in restoring marginal shots is greater than that for stable shots, the priority of restoration must remain the same and can not be classed as impractical.

8. Problems encountered by the 43rd Signal Battalion during activation and subsequent mission assignment can be eliminated with communications engineering, equipment stock piling installation, and shake down testing prior to accepting a mission. Were this possible in the case of this battalion and many other units committed during rapid buildups, a much smoother transition and more reliable communications network would have resulted with less overall effort and expense.



HUNTER L. SHARP
Colonel, SigC
Commanding

SCCVOP (31 Jan 67)

2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report for the Quarterly Period Ending 31 January
1967 (RCS-CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST SIGNAL BRIGADE (USASTRATCOM), APO San Francisco
96307

14 MAR 1967

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVC-DH,
APO 96307

Commanding General, United States Army Strategic Communications
Command Washington, D. C. 20315

1. IAW AR 1-19, subject report from the 43d Signal Battalion is
forwarded.

2. Concur in the Commander's Observations and Recommendations as
modified by 1st Indorsement.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


WILLIAM A. HIGGINS
Colonel, SigC
Deputy

AVBCC-DH (20 Feb 67)

3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 January 1967 (RCS CSFOR-65)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96307 8 APR 1967

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the period ending 31 January 1967 from Headquarters, 43d Signal Battalion (Support) as indorsed.

2. Reference Paragraph d, Part I, Section II, Page 4, concerning personnel security clearances, and Paragraph 4, 1st Indorsement: Concur.

a. As a minimum, a request for a National Agency Check should be initiated for those personnel requiring a security clearance prior to their deployment to this command. Recommend that CONUS commanders include in POR/POM checks a review of personnel records to insure that records of personnel who require a security clearance indicate the required clearance. If personnel do not have a clearance, records should indicate that a National Agency Check has been initiated.

b. If an individual arrives in RVN and there is no evidence of a security clearance or of an investigation for a security clearance in his records, an interim clearance may be granted in accordance with paragraph 20, AR 604-5. Authority has been delegated to subordinate commands to grant interim security clearances. If evidence of an investigation for a security clearance exists in the personnel records, a request for a check of US Army Investigative Records Repository (USAIRR) should be made. Current processing time for a request for a check of USAIRR is approximately thirty days.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



STANLEY E. SCHULTS
Major, AGC
Asst Adjutant General

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nc

GPOP-OK(20 Feb 67)

4th Ind

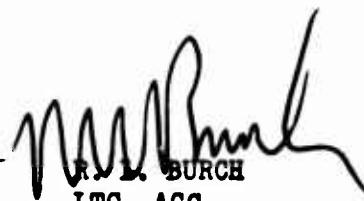
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
31 January 1967 (RCS CSFOR-65), HQ 43d Sig Bn (Spt)

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 19 MAY 1967

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

1. This headquarters concurs in the basic report as indorsed.
2. Reference paragraph d, Part I, Section II, basic report. Current personnel requisitioning procedures for replacements requiring a security clearance are adequate if followed. Appropriate instructions will be prepared by this headquarters advising CGUSARV to identify specific security clearance problem cases so that corrective action can be taken.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:



R. D. BURCH
LTC, AGC
Asst AG

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